

What's Stopping You?

7 strategies for getting your book off
your wish list and into people's lives

Dr. Liz aka

dou-la [doo-luh]

The Book Doula™

Doula: noun [fr. Modern Greek: female servant]:
An experienced professional who provides
ongoing practical and emotional support to
someone before, during, and after a birth

Copyright ©2010 Dr. Liz Alexander, The Book Doula™. All Rights Reserved.

First Edition: February 2010

Second Edition: March 2010

No part of this document may be reproduced in whole or in part, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from Dr. Liz Alexander, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review, citing title, author, and date as follows:

“Reproduced with permission from *What’s Stopping You? Seven Strategies for Getting Your Book off Your Wish List and Into People’s Lives* by Dr. Liz Alexander, ©2010.”

For more information and free resources for writers, visit: www.bookdoula.biz and www.bookdoula.biz/blog/

To receive a free monthly email newsletter delivering tips and updates about nonfiction book writing as a means of promoting your business, service, or subject-matter expertise, email: drliz@bookdoula.biz

Contents

- ❖ About You
- ❖ About This E-book
- ❖ Section One
 - ◆ Find Your Passion
 - ◆ Let's Find Your Motivation
 - ◆ No Excuses
 - ◆ Four Emotional Obstacles That Keep You from Writing
 - ◆ Three Mental Obstacles That Keep You from Writing
 - ◆ Four Behavioral Obstacles That Keep You from Writing
 - ◆ Find What Excites You
 - ◆ Let's Get Started!
- ❖ Section Two
 - ◆ Strategy #1: Find Your Big Idea
 - ◆ Strategy #2: Pounce on Your Ideas
 - ◆ Strategy #3: Prepare and Pace
 - ◆ Strategy #4: Give Your Creative Potential a Boost
 - ◆ Strategy #5: Allow the How
 - ◆ Strategy #6: You Already Are
 - ◆ Strategy #7: Don't Go It Alone
- ❖ A Final Message
- ❖ About Dr. Liz

About You



Change rooms in your mind for a day.

-All the Hemispheres by Hafiz



You are brilliant! More specifically, you are a brilliant writer. A brilliant author. With brilliant books to your name that have sold brilliantly. Books that have boosted an already brilliant business, brought about new career opportunities, and attracted multiple streams of income. Isn't that brilliant?

But that's not what you think of as your current reality, is it? Perhaps because:

- You've never written a book-length manuscript before
- You have limited belief in your writing ability
- You remain unnerved at the prospect of making such a big commitment
- You don't know where to begin

Here I am telling you that you're a brilliant writer and author, but there's no *evidence* of that that you can see. By changing your perspective, you will—very soon. As your Book Doula, my role is to help you see what is obvious to me (and, heck, I may not even have met you!), to make what is currently invisible, visible. Each of us is everything we believe ourselves to be. Your job is to start believing in your ability to birth not some so-so book that does little for your professional reputation and credibility, but a brilliant book.

You will begin this almost magical process by reading this e-book, engaging with the exercises, perhaps journaling to capture the new thoughts and amazing ideas that come to you, and fully realizing your passion for contributing something meaningful to the world.

About This E-book

There are already plenty of books that have been written about the mechanics of writing. This isn't one of them. When I went to amazon.com just now and searched for "how to write a book" I was confronted by 111,067 options. A quick peek at some of the contents pages confirmed my suspicions. Most, if not all, of these books focus on telling you how to formulate a thesis or central argument for your book, how to conduct research, construct clear sentences, use signposting, incorporate metaphors into your writing, and give credit where it's due. How-to books by scholarly nonfiction authors, novelists, and others will show you the difference between writing a query letter to an agent and a letter to ask a contact for a pre-publication testimonial. You can find out how to attract a good agent, the pros and cons of self-publishing, print-on-demand and writing e-books, and how to work successfully with your agent, editor, and publisher.

I'm assuming someone (because I didn't scroll down far enough to find one) has already written about how to acquire the marketing and promotional skills in order to ensure your book will be a commercial success. Certainly you'll find blog postings on this topic, many by exasperated agents dismayed by the lack of understanding by new writers about their industry. As my experience bears out, some publishers are better than others at helping you promote your book, without which only your friends, family, and existing contacts are likely to see it. All publishers who are paying you an advance and royalties will expect you to demonstrate your "platform" before they write you a check, because they want evidence for the question, "Why this book, and why should you be the author?" Even if you choose to go the self-publishing route, it's still an important question to ask yourself if you are serious about birthing a book that enhances your credibility and professional reputation.

Some titles promise to teach you how to write a book in a week. As a professional author since the mid-1980s, and having written in some form or another since I could first pick up a pencil, I write 10,000 to 15,000 words in a weekend fairly regularly. Afterwards I'm totally exhausted and take several days to do something different, albeit still in the service of my profession, perhaps by reading, conducting research, or using social media as a way to promote my work. I never delude myself that these words are immediately publishable, or that they constitute what I would define as a "book," as opposed to a pamphlet-length work that I've heard more and more people these days refer to as their latest book. Certainly you could write a book in a week, if you've got the stamina. But to write a book that you're proud of and which helps to boost your business or career? I think not.

Okay, enough about what this e-book is not! Here's my rationale for steering you away from delving straight into the mechanics of writing: knowing all of these things does not help you when you think you have read everything there is to know about writing, but you just can't find the motivation to do so. It's like having taken a class in car mechanics or reading the relevant *Idiot's Guide* and then deciding that you don't really *want* to have your head under the hood all weekend; there are other ways to spend your time that interest you more. Or, having read Julia Child from cover to cover, you find that the minute you walk into the kitchen your mind is tempting you with all the other things you'd prefer to do *besides* cooking a gourmet meal.

In short, you can be the most well-informed would-be writer in the world, but that's not going to turn you into an *actual* writer—let alone a published author—if you can't muster up the energy or enthusiasm to sit down at the computer or pick up a pen and write.

That is why, in this e-book, you'll find advice and practical exercises on:

- How to find that vital, emotional compulsion to get your subject-matter expertise out of your head and onto the page (Introduction)

- How to look beyond the first idea that comes to you for your book and find an approach that is much more innovative and compelling, both to you and your readers (Strategies 1 and 4)
- Why it's important to act quickly—to *do* anything at all—when a good idea comes to you, in order to kick-start the momentum (Strategy 2)
- What characteristics you need to find and develop that will enable you to do what writers do, consistently and well (Strategy 3)
- The difference between keeping an inspired outcome in mind (good!) and getting mired in always needing to know *how* that desired outcome will become reality (not good!) (Strategy 5)
- Why writing should not be viewed as simply a mechanical process, and how it can become a spiritual induction into changing the nature of your reality (Strategy 6)
- How to see beyond the myth that writing is a lonely profession best suited to alcoholics, depressives, and misanthropes (Strategy 7)

As you can see, there is a lot of material in this e-book that you have probably never encountered before in works that claim to show you how to write and be published. I hope this prospect excites and delights you. If not, you might want to re-examine your motives for writing at all. (The Introduction will help you with that.) Energy, passion, commitment, perseverance, a sense of accomplishment and overcoming challenge— all the stuff we associate with emotion and motivation—are part and parcel of *being* a writer. If you have acquired all of these, then the mechanics of writing—which are easy enough to learn—can be applied effectively. Without them, your work is unlikely to make its mark on the world. And don't you want to birth something that is really special, not just another self-published vanity project or so-so e-book?

As Anne Lamott wrote in *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*:

The problem that comes up over and over again is that these people [her students] want to be published. They *kind* of want to write, but they *really* want to be published. You'll never get to where you want to be that way, I tell them.

Lamott also goes on to admit that, “Very few writers really know what they are doing until they’ve done it,” which is to say that you should be less concerned with reading all those how-to books on writing and more concerned with finding professional support and guidance to keep you focused on actually writing.

So if you are open-minded, open-hearted, trusting, curious, and eager to explore the prelude to all those other books you may have already read on selecting the right words, constructing sentences, and writing query letters to agents, you’ve come to the right place. If not, I can confirm that there are 111,067 other books waiting for you—just go to amazon.com and search for “how to write a book.”

Still with me? Wonderful! The journey is about to start. Let’s begin by finding out more about what excites you.

Section One

Find Your Passion

“

When I sit down at my writing desk, time seems to vanish. I think it’s a wonderful way to spend one’s life.

–Erica Jong

”

As anyone who knows me will confirm, I’m something of an expert on getting things done.

- Between 1997 and 2002 I had eight books published. These were not *self-published* works or e-books, but 40,000- to 50,000-word books that were commissioned, edited, and printed by major international publishers, including Random House. I wrote two books each year from 1999 to 2001 while at the same time working as a freelance journalist, motivational speaker, coach, and consultant. I've written ten nonfiction titles that have reached more than half a million readers.
- I earned both a master's degree and a Ph.D. from The University at Texas at Austin in five years, in educational psychology (with an emphasis on motivation and cognition), while also working 30 hours a week and bringing up a high-maintenance 90-pound black Labrador.
- For my dissertation I studied how disadvantaged young adults achieved educational and career success. My resulting model of hope revealed how some people overcome extreme challenge and uncertainty to make emotionally invested goals their reality.

This e-book focuses on how to get things done—in particular, how to free yourself from whatever imagined limitations, fears, false beliefs, lack of motivation, or willpower have prevented you from turning any dream into reality. It's just that the dream we're dealing with specifically is that of writing a book. And not just any old book, but brilliant nonfiction that promotes your business, boosts your career, and attracts multiple streams of income.

No matter what opinions you hold about the marketability of your ideas, your writing ability, or your lack of knowledge about publishing, all of these things can be learned quickly and easily, especially nowadays with all the information available on the Internet. Other people—whether The Book Doula, a writing coach, the members of a writers' group, or friends and family—can help make up for any shortfalls in your existing

knowledge and expertise. What you don't yet *know* is not the problem. What you choose not to *do*, is.

Let's Find Your Motivation

No one else can make up for your lack of motivation, unless, of course, this involves hiring someone to ghostwrite your book. Many businesspeople do this. It's expensive and often takes more time than expected, but you can spend money on having a book written on your behalf and that will be that.

If you can't afford a ghostwriter or would like to know how marvelous it feels not just to see your name on the cover of a book, but to be able to tell admirers that you actually wrote it, then allow me to help you discover the necessary clarity, confidence, and passion to help your writing feel more inspired, easy, and joyful.

That's why, rather than assuming you already know how to do this and walking you immediately through the nuts and bolts of writing a book, I'd like to take you a step back by spending the next few hours, days, or weeks knocking down all those barriers that are preventing you from having *more* of anything in your life—whether that's more joy, more meaning, more fulfillment, more success, more money, more credibility, or more books to your name. To accomplish any of those things, you need to be motivated enough to take action.

Essentially, then, this is an e-book on personal growth, full of tips and strategies that can move you to the next level in any area of your life. Even though it might seem as if writing a book has everything to do with thoughts and thinking, the first place we're going to start is with your emotions.

No Excuses

“ We want to set goals that our heart conceives, that our mind believes, and our bodies will carry out.

–Jim Rohn

”

Am I right in assuming that there are things you always get around to doing? Even if you think of yourself as the world’s biggest procrastinator, isn’t it true that when certain people ask for your help you’re right there as needed? When certain activities need your attention you don’t sit and think about them, but get on and accomplish what is required? These situations, I suspect, involved people and activities that you deeply care about. You react from your heart rather than your head and get them done. Isn’t that so? That’s your first clue, then, as to how to get anything done: find the emotional driver. As the late personal development entrepreneur, Jim Rohn, advised, you need to set goals conceived by the heart—which means ones that are emotionally important to you.

So, let’s imagine that you already have this great idea for a book. (We’re just imagining for now. If you don’t have an idea, don’t worry, we’ll get to that part later—and it’s not as hard as you might think.). You already understand that with the right kind of marketing and promotion, this book will boost your professional reputation and personal credibility. But you just never seem to get around to starting it or completing it. What’s stopping you?

Here’s a list of common obstacles to accomplishing that outcome, divided into three sections: emotional (feelings), mental (beliefs), and behavioral (actions).

Four Emotional Obstacles That Keep You from Writing

“ We’re born with two fears: falling and loud noises. All other fears are acquired.
–Mark Fisher and Marc Allen, *How to Think Like a Millionaire* ”

Most writers or would-be writers confront at least one of these obstacles:

- Fear of failure
- Fear of success
- Fear of the unknown
- Feeling overwhelmed by the size of the project

Emotional Obstacle #1: Fear of Failure

We all know people who are fond of telling everyone how they “could have done something” (started their own business, written a book, earned a Ph.D.), but who always find some excuse for why it hasn’t happened—yet. The implication is always that they will, indeed, achieve their dream, just some time in the unspecified future.

Our culture is mostly intolerant of failure, which is ironic for a country that prides itself on creativity and innovation. Innovation isn’t magical and instantaneous, but it is generally borne out of a series of incremental stages of learning that to some signal “failure” and to others (like the prolific and brilliant nineteenth-century inventor, Thomas Edison) are part and parcel of doing things differently.

Failure and imagination were the two topics that best-selling author J.K. Rowling (the creator of the *Harry Potter* novels) wove together during her [2008 commencement speech](#) at Harvard. Rowling described one of the benefits of failure as the “stripping away of the inessential”:

I stopped pretending to myself that I was anything other than what I was, and began to direct all my energy into finishing the only work that mattered to me. Had I really succeeded at anything else, I might never have found the

determination to succeed in the one arena I believed I truly belonged. I was set free, because my greatest fear had been realized, and I was still alive, and I still had a daughter whom I adored, and I had an old typewriter and a big idea. And so rock bottom became the solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life.

None of us ever truly knows who we are or what we are capable of until we are tested. Recently on my Facebook page I quoted T. Harv Eker, author of *Secrets of the Millionaire Mind*, who wrote, “If you have a big problem in your life, all that means is that you are being a small person.” By doing this I wasn’t suggesting that people facing major life crises are small people, just that such challenges afford us the opportunity to see just how big or small we really are, depending on what we choose to do about our circumstances.

So, while none but the courageous among us would go out of our way to seek failure, we should always remember that failing is crucial to learning and personal growth. No one sits at the computer and types a word-perfect, pristine manuscript they know will become a best-seller. The book you have in your hand, when you read any work of fiction or nonfiction, is typically the result of much “red-penning” by editors whose job it is to improve their clients’ work. Of all human activities, the act of creating anything goes hand in hand with failure. Don’t fear it—welcome it. In the attempt you will learn much about yourself and your craft that is never, ever wasted.

Emotional Obstacle #2: Fear of Success

As Marianne Williamson expressed so beautifully in her book, *A Return to Love*, “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.”

This pernicious flip-side of the “fear of failure” coin is responsible for so much self-sabotaging behavior. For all our drive to set goals, imagine brighter futures, and change our lives, the fact is that most of the time we’re quite content with the way things are. We fear success because that change might alienate our current friends, relationships, and

Buy the complete e-book to continue reading.

Only \$9.

Immediate download.

[CLICK HERE](#) TO BUY NOW.

Dr. Liz, The Book Doula

Website: www.bookdoula.biz

Email: drliz@bookdoula.biz



About Dr. Liz

The Book Doula

Dr. Liz Alexander is the author of [ten non-fiction books](#) that, collectively, have sold close to half a million copies worldwide. A former freelance journalist on both sides of the Atlantic, she has written hundreds of articles for publications ranging from British Airways' *Business Life* magazine and Harvard Business Press newsletters to *Human Resources* and *Training* magazines.

As The Book Doula, Dr. Liz offers:

- One-on-one coaching, helping writers to conceive, develop, and birth their nonfiction books
- Workshops on topics including how to generate brilliant book ideas, completing a book proposal in six hours, time management for writers, and more
- Keynotes and other speaking services for conferences (writers' or business) and events
- Ghostwriting for select clients

To find out how Dr. Liz can help you birth your dream:

Website: www.bookdoula.biz

Email: drliz@bookdoula.biz